



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***GOVERNOR NAPOLITANO TO SIGN FIVE-STATE AGREEMENT
Western States Partner in Western Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction***

WASHINGTON – Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano and the governors of California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington today announced the Western Regional Climate Action Initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their five states. The governors will sign an agreement creating the Initiative during the National Governors Association annually winter meeting.

The agreement charges the five states to develop a regional target for reducing greenhouse gases collectively among their states within the next six months. Then they have 18 months to devise a program, such as a load-based cap and trade program, to reach the target. The five states also have agreed to participate in a multi-state registry to track and manage greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

“In the absence of meaningful federal action, it is up to the states to take action to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this country,” said Governor Napolitano. “Western States are being particularly hard-hit by the effects of climate change.”

The Western Regional Climate Action Initiative builds on existing greenhouse gas reduction efforts in the individual states. Last fall, Governor Napolitano issued an executive order setting a goal to reduce Arizona’s greenhouse gas emissions to the 2000 emissions level by the year 2020 and to reduce emissions to 50 percent below the 2000 level by 2040.

Napolitano also directed state agencies to take a number of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including requiring state agencies to purchase only vehicles that are hybrids, meet low-greenhouse gas emissions standards, or use clean-burning fuels.

In 2005, Governor Napolitano appointed the Arizona Climate Change Advisory Group, which in August 2006 issued 49 recommendations for reducing Arizona’s greenhouse gas emissions. One of the group’s recommendations called for Arizona to join with other western states to create a regional greenhouse gas reduction program, such as a cap-and-trade program. The Western Regional Climate Action Initiative implements that recommendation.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Arizona are growing significantly due to rapid growth in the state. The Climate Change Advisory Group estimated that between 1990 and 2005, Arizona's greenhouse gas emissions increased by roughly 56 percent. It also estimated that by 2020, Arizona's greenhouse gas emissions would increase by nearly 150 percent over 1990 levels in the absence of reduction efforts being taken.

Arizona and other western states have suffered from prolonged drought, decreased snowfall, increased and earlier snowmelt, and more severe and devastating forest and rangeland fires in recent years as a result of changes in the climate.

The recently-released Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that the Western United States will be especially affected by increased temperatures and climatic changes resulting from the build up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Moreover, last week, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences issued a report that found warmer future temperatures due to climate change will reduce future Colorado River stream flow and water supplies in the Colorado River Basin.

"Climate change is real, and it is having significant impacts on Arizona," Napolitano said. "This agreement is an important step toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Arizona and the West."

A copy of the Western Regional Climate Action Initiative agreement is attached.